



## The *LOCAL Foods Act*

### **Introduced by:**

Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.)

### **Background:**

The *Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906 (FMIA)* mandates that all meat in the United States undergo inspection by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). However, FMIA's Personal-Use Exemption removes traditional inspection requirements for individuals who raise an animal to slaughter and butcher for personal consumption. In 2018, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued updated guidance expanding the Personal-Use Exemption, allowing livestock owners to slaughter animals themselves or have a custom-exempt operator slaughter and process their livestock without an inspection.

This updated guidance expands markets for small and rural farmers by enabling producers to sell a live animal to a consumer, have it slaughtered, and then processed at a custom processing facility. Additionally, this change helps address the scarcity of USDA-inspected slaughterhouses, ease bottlenecks for small-scale producers, increase ways for producers to sell locally, and strengthen food supply chains.

### **Legislation:**

The *Livestock Owned by Communities to Advance Local (LOCAL) Foods Act of 2024* would replace the *FMIA*'s Personal-Use Exemption language, allowing consumers to buy a live animal, in whole or in part, from a producer and designate an agent to help in slaughtering and processing the meat.

The *LOCAL Foods Act* aims to codify current USDA guidance by explicitly allowing owners to designate an agent to slaughter and process their livestock. Replacing *FMIA* language to align with the standing FSIS guidance will improve national and local food systems by reducing costs related to animal transport, relieving pressure on backlogged slaughterhouses, increasing farm viability, improving animal welfare, and bolstering food chain security.

### **Endorsing Organizations:**

The *LOCAL Foods Act* is endorsed by the Farm Action Fund, Farmers and Ranchers Freedom Alliance, Farm-to-Consumer Defense Fund, Kentucky Black Farmers Association, National Family Farm Coalition, and Rural Vermont.